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1-5287

5 February 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
 SUBJECT: Request from Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy

1. Senator Brian McMahon, Chairman, Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, has requested a comprehensive estimate on Soviet capabilities "to impair, prevent, or frustrate the delivery of atomic weapons to targets inside the USSR".

2. This agency, with the assistance of the Departmental intelligence organizations, is willing to undertake the preparation of the necessary estimate, which we believe is desirable to insure Congressional support.

3. However, Senator McMahon's request necessitates an appraisal of Soviet defensive capabilities in terms of U. S. offensive capabilities, and this can only be done with the cooperation of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group because of its recent operational analyses in this field.

4. Therefore, I request your authorization for the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group to participate in this project. The finished product will be issued as a national estimate with the same limited distribution as that recently given to the report on the Soviet atomic energy program.

MORI/CDF Page 2

*2/ Walter B. Smith*  
 WALTER B. SMITH  
 Director

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FEB 1 1951

The Honorable Brian McMahon  
Chairman  
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy  
Congress of the United States  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 1951 in which you request a report on Soviet capabilities to counter the delivery of U. S. atomic weapons. An estimate of this scope will require the participation of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group of the Department of Defense, which I have requested. This Agency is willing to undertake the responsibility of preparation and of bringing the estimate into the current schedule of intelligence production. This will take some time as a detailed study will be necessary, but I believe we can have a satisfactory estimate ready for you by April 1.

Your letter also requests information as to the background of the semi-annual report which was recently delivered to you. Since this information is of a very sensitive nature, I have asked Mr. Walter Pforzheimer to discuss with you informally the best means by which it can be transmitted to you.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

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Walter R. Smith  
Director

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*Offl*

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